

BBA course in Dhaka University uncertain

Will the much publicised Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) course be opened in Dhaka University during the next academic session?

The authorities concerned are not quite sure, and cannot answer in the affirmative. The course was advertised by the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of the university in October last year.

It is gathered that about 4500 students had applied seeking admission to the course where only 120 seats were offered. The university authorities, however, ordered postponement of the admission tests in December, 1987. Since then no decision has been taken on the question.

Meanwhile, a good number of Bangladeshi students have got themselves admitted to BBA courses abroad, mostly in Bangkok and the United States. Absence of this course in Bangladesh draws Bangladeshi students abroad every year, sources say.

The IBA of Dhaka University offers business management course only at the master's level. The institute is reputed for its standard of instructions and attracts students from Nepal, India and Maldives. Now it is fully equipped to start BBA

course, an IBA source told this reporter.

When admission to the BBA course was postponed in 1987, the university authorities had raised procedural questions, such as, the course was advertised before obtaining approval of the university Academic Council.

A meeting of the Board of Governors of the institute was needed to forward the matter to the Academic Council. But no meeting of the board was held during the last 10 months. Both the board of governors of IBA and the university Academic Council are headed by the Vice-Chancellor of the university.

Business management graduates are in high demand in the country. Passouts of IBA are recruited by different establishments even before the completion of their field training at industrial and business concerns. It is gathered that the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry has given a representation to Prime Minister Baisir Hossain Moudud Ahmed, who holds the industries portfolio, to ensure opening of the BBA course.

Earlier in 1980, the Directorate of Technical Education had requested the University of Dhaka to open such a course at IBA,

but the institute was not prepared to shoulder that task in the early 80s. The request followed a movement organised by students of the Commercial Institute to open such a course.

Asked why the institute did not fulfil the procedural obligations while advertising the BBA course in 1987, an IBA source said that the advertisement had followed an approval given by the Vice-Chancellor to a proposal for introduction of the course. It was also felt that since the VC was the head of both the governing body of IBA and the Academic Council of the university, there would be no procedural obstacles, the source said.

According to him a proposal for BBA course was prepared after a thorough study as early as 1970. That process, delayed because of the war of liberation, 1971, came to an end in the early seventies when the political climate was against the very existence of IBA set up in 1966 with assistance from the United States.

The question of opening BBA course was taken up again in 1986. A task force created at the institute studies BBA programmes in about 35 universities around the world before developing a curriculum for IBA. The academic committee of IBA approved the report and the curriculum prepared by the task force, and then the proposal was placed before the VC for starting the course, the IBA source said.

Meanwhile, physical facilities of the institute were expanded with assistance from the World Bank since 1983, and the number of teachers was doubled from 20 to over 40. The library of the institute was also enriched through the procurement of thousands of books and journals.

The IBA task force which was in touch with about 35 universities also received a proposal for academic collaboration from a Canadian university where BBA course is being run for about half a century.

According to sources the Canadian CIDA is actively considering a 5-year package of assistance worth one million Canadian dollars to finance the proposed collaboration between the two universities, the source said.

The IBA source said, Dhaka University authorities or the government would not have to make any extra allocation to the institute for opening the proposed BBA course. Inaction has made the fate of the course uncertain.